



MEMORANDUM

Date: February 5, 2015

To: Board of Park Commissioners

From: Susan Golub, Manager, Policy and Performance Management Unit

Subject: Community Center Strategic Plan

Requested Board Action

This is an informational briefing with no action requested of the Board at this time. After a public review process the Board will be asked for a recommendation on the Community Center Strategic Plan in late summer.

Project Description

The Community Center Strategic Plan will define a vision for Parks 26 community centers, establish operating guidelines, set performance measures and assess facility needs. The Plan will build on the community center analysis of the Parks Legacy Plan, a 2013 response to a Community Center Statement of Legislative Intent, and the advice Parks has received from the Park Board at the August 2014 retreat and at subsequent briefings.

A critical component of the Plan will come from the Recreation Demand Study Parks recently initiated with the Beckwith Consulting Group. The Study will look at several areas within recreation, including community centers, and will provide a forecast of demand and recreation trends. Included in the demand analysis will be a look at both community center users and non-users, with an assessment of why the non-users don't come into our facilities. The Plan will also address what other cities are doing with respect to community center programming and operations. The Plan will include a mini-plan for each center which will have high level recommendations for the facility: there may be recommendations for a particular programming emphasis at a center, but there will not be specific staffing recommendations. (Attachment A shows the draft Plan outline.)

Public Involvement Process

The public involvement process for reviewing the draft Community Center Strategic Plan is still being developed, with the Board's retreat discussion providing good guidance. As was discussed with the Board at the August retreat, our intent is for the Board to host the public involvement: "The Board of Park Commissioners invite you to:" with the "to *what*" still to be determined. Involvement of the Associated Recreation Council (ARC) and the community center advisory

councils will be integral to the public involvement. We will return to the Board in the spring to further discuss public involvement.

Issues

- 1. Conveying our vision:** The consultant evaluating best practices for community center operations, Ken Ballard of Ballard King Associates, is also conducting stakeholder interviews. His first round included interviews with City Council and Budget Office staff where Mr. Ballard heard loud and clear that Parks has not articulated a clear vision for our centers. The Plan will describe our ideal for community centers and what the community gains from them. Our goal will be to impart to others why Parks staff treasure community centers.
- 2. Hours/staffing:** The Board's retreat discussion provided valuable insight into how we tell our story of the past several years of budget cuts: instead of "aint it awful," focus on solving the problem. The \$1.3 million in Park District funds allocated to community center operations will provide increased staffing at centers, but no increase in hours.
- 3. Facilities assessment:** In addition to analyzing operations, the Plan will include an assessment of facilities. Information from the Recreation Demand Study will tell us if we have the right number of facilities in the right locations. In addition, Planning and Development Division staff are assessing facility needs and the results of these assessments will be included in the Plan.

Budget

Funds for the consultant support for the Community Center Strategic Plan are coming from a variety of sources. The Recreation Demand Study is being paid for by small contributions from the Park District initiatives which will benefit from the Study: off-leash Areas, life-long recreation, and programs for people with disabilities contributed small amounts and the remainder is coming from Parks General Fund budget, as is the funding for the best practices consultant.

When the Park District was approved by the City Council, the Council transferred \$1.3 million in District funds from center operations to center rehabilitation and development, *subject to the completion of a strategic plan*. Depending on the recommendations in the strategic plan, Parks will request the Council transfer some or all of the funds back to operations with the 2016 budget.

Schedule

Attachment B shows the draft timeline for developing and reviewing the Community Center Strategic Plan.

Additional Information

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Attachments

Attachment A: Plan Outline

Attachment B: Plan Timeline